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EDITORIAL COMMENT.

The Gypsy Moth and Economic Entomology.—In the presidential address delivered before the Association of Economic Entomologists, last August, the motives of those who oppose the large appropriations made by the State of Massachusetts for the extermination of the gypsy moth are attributed to “unfortunate jealousy or unreasonable prejudice.” In the same address the expression of individual opinion is deplored, and while diversity of view is recognized as an essential of progress, the expression of such diversity before the public is condemned.

The *American Naturalist* has more than once taken ground against the annual appropriation for the extermination of the gypsy moth, and with the keenest appreciation of the objects and aims of sound economic work is prepared to maintain that, given all the money and all the men asked for, the extermination of the insect in Massachusetts is doomed to failure. The public, always slow to accept the results of science, will regard this failure to the detriment of scientific work, and when popular support is needed the claims of science will be discredited. As a recent writer says: “Is it not sometimes the part of wisdom in a prudent business man to let a bad investment go, rather than to lose more money by trying to save what is already lost?”

The gypsy moth problem in Massachusetts may be briefly stated: Introduced in the egg stage in 1868 or 1869, the insect at first escaped general notice; in 1889, however, it caused so much destruction in Malden and Medford that the state was asked, in 1890, to take measures for its extermination. A commission was at first appointed, and served for less than a year; since 1891 the work has been directed by a committee of the State Board of Agriculture. Nearly one million dollars has been expended in the work of extermination. This work, prosecuted with more vigor than judgment, has greatly reduced the damage done in badly infested districts, but has not succeeded in keeping the insect within the original boundaries as defined in 1891. The injury caused by the cutting down of trees and bushes, the wanton destruction, by burning, of birds during the nesting season, and the general tidying up of beautiful wild country roads and ways

are features of the work of extermination that cannot be too strongly condemned. While the work for extermination is approved by the official vote of the Association of Economic Entomologists, it is unfavorably viewed by many eminent entomologists, by most scientific men living in the infested district, and by a large and rapidly increasing number of residents under the eyes of whom the work of extermination is carried on. It is also opposed by one of the original members of the committee appointed in 1891, a man deeply interested in the agricultural welfare of the state and country.

The most effective testimony against extermination and in favor of suppression is the practical experience of a resident of Medford, Mr. Walter C. Wright. Mr. Wright lives in the heart of the infested district, and has upon more than thirty acres of land, the larger part woodland, brought about "a thorough suppression, and the time and expense which have been devoted to the work are not worth naming." Mr. Wright adds: "I should blush to ask state aid for it."

In view of these facts, is it worth while to continue the present extravagant policy? We answer emphatically, No!

The common-sense view—and it was Huxley who said that science is but common sense applied to common things—was pointed out several years ago, and has been frequently repeated. It may be summed up as follows:

1. Abandon the policy of extermination, and turn all resources towards the suppression of dangerous outbreaks.

2. Formulate a law for the suppression of all insect and fungus pests. Employ a corps of men to point out to landowners and to town and city authorities the proper mode of coping with dangerous pests.

If the landowners or the authorities fail to observe the law, after proper notice, the work should be done by the state at the delinquent's charge. To enforce this law the employment of from ten to twelve men, with an annual appropriation of \$50,000, will suffice. The work should be under the charge of the State Board of Agriculture.

The advocacy of one view for ourselves and one view for the public requires no comment.

Zoölogical Instruction in German and American Universities. —

There is one very marked difference between the German and the American universities in regard to what belongs to the field of zoölogical instruction. In Germany a student would rarely think of going to the professor of zoölogy for instruction in matters relating to the vertebrates. He would nearly always turn to the professor of